

**Amendments To The Claims:**

1. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system for transporting and deploying an expansible stent, said stent delivery system comprising:

- A) delivery means for positioning the stent at a selected position in the patient's body, said delivery means including a sheath normally overlying the stent in its compact transport form, the stent having an inner surface, the sheath having a ring, the ring forming a distal end of the sheath, the ring assisting in the compression of the stent to the compact transport form from a partially deployed form, and an inner core normally underlying the stent in its compact transport form, and
- B) deployment means for selectively deploying and retracting the stent relative to said sheath, said deployment means including at least two rings attached to and extending from said inner core and engaging the inner surface of the stent in its compact condition.

2. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 1 wherein an outer diameter of at least one of said at least two rings is greater than a minimum inner diameter ( $ID_{min}$ ), of portions of the stent in its compacted form.

3. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 2 wherein at least one of said at least two rings engage the stent proximate a proximal end of the stent in its compact transport form.

4. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in 3 wherein said delivery means further includes a handle disposed at a proximal end of said sheath and said inner core, said handle having a first actuator means for proximally retracting said sheath relative to said inner core and a second actuator means for distally displacing said inner core relative to said sheath, such that selective manipulation of said first and second actuator means enables selective deployment of the stent in an expanded form outside of said sheath and retraction of the stent within said sheath from a partially deployed state.

5. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 1 wherein said delivery means is adapted for use in a working channel of an endoscopic device of the type having a viewing channel, said delivery means including visible indicia proximate its distal end visible through the viewing channel of the endoscopic device indicating the extent of deployment of the stent.

6. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 5 wherein said delivery means further includes a handle disposed at a proximal end of said sheath and said inner core, said handle having a first actuator means for proximally retracting said sheath relative to said inner core and a second actuator means for distally displacing said inner core relative to said sheath, such that manipulation of said first and second actuator means enables selective deployment of the stent in an expanded form outside of said sheath and retraction of the stent in the compact form within said sheath.

7. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 1, the at least two rings comprising a first ring and a second ring, wherein the second ring is axially spaced from said first ring, said first and second rings engaging the stent proximate a proximal end of the stent in its compact form.

8. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 7 wherein said delivery means further includes a handle disposed at a proximal end of said sheath and said inner core, said handle having a first actuator means for proximally retracting said sheath relative to said inner core and a second actuator means for distally displacing said inner core relative to said sheath, such that manipulation of said first and second actuator means enables selective deployment of the stent in an expanded form outside of said sheath and retraction of the stent within said sheath from a partially deployed condition in the compact form.

9. **(Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 8 wherein said delivery means is adapted for use in a working channel of an endoscopic device of the type having a viewing channel, said delivery means including visible indicia proximate its distal end visible

through the viewing channel of the endoscopic device indicating the extent of deployment of the stent.

**10. (Cancelled)**

**11. (Previously Presented)** A stent delivery system as recited in claim 1 wherein said delivery means is adapted for use in a working channel of an endoscopic device of the type having a viewing channel, said delivery means including visible indicia proximate its distal end visible through the viewing channel of the endoscopic device indicating the extent of deployment of the stent.

**12. (Previously Presented)** An elongated, tubular stent delivery system for transporting a stent in a compact form within a patient's body for selective deployment of the stent in an expanded form within a patient's vessel comprising a distal end region including a sheath and a flexible core at the distal end region for overlying and underlying, respectively, a stent carried at the distal end region of the delivery system in the compact form, the stent having an inner surface, and a proximal end region including a first handle portion connected to the sheath and a second handle portion connected to the core to enable relative axial displacement of the sheath and the core, the improvement comprising at least two rings engaged to and extending from the core to engage the inner surface of the stent disposed in the compact form within said sheath such that upon the displacement of the sheath relative to the core the stent moves relative to the sheath, the sheath comprising a ring, the ring forming a distal end of the sheath, the ring assisting in the compression of the stent to the compact form from a partially deployed form.

**13. (Previously Presented)** A tubular stent delivery system as recited in claim 12 wherein each of said at least two rings has an outer diameter  $D_r$ , such that  $D_r > ID_{min}$ , a minimum inner diameter of portions of the stent in its compacted form.

**14. (Previously Presented)** A tubular stent delivery system as recited in claim 13 wherein at least one of said at least two rings engages the stent proximate a proximal end of the stent in its

compact form.

15. **(Previously Presented)** A tubular stent delivery system as recited in claim 14 wherein said stent has portions with an inner diameter  $ID_{max}$  disposed between portions of the stent having its minimum inner diameter where  $ID_{min} < D_r < ID_{max}$  and each of said at least two rings is disposed intermediate the minimum inner diameter portions.

16. **(Previously Presented)** A tubular stent delivery system as recited in claim 15 wherein said delivery system is adapted for use in a working channel of an endoscopic device of the type having a viewing channel and the distal end of the stent having indicia proximate the distal end of the core, said indicia being of the type visible through the viewing channel of an endoscopic device and indicating the extent of deployment of the stent.

17. **(Previously Presented)** A tubular stent delivery system as recited in claim 12, the at least two rings comprising a first ring and a second ring, wherein the second ring is secured to the core proximate to and axially spaced from the first ring, wherein said first and second rings are proximally spaced from a distal end of the stent in its compacted delivery state.

18-19. **(Cancelled).**

20. **(Currently Amended)** A method for delivering and selectively deploying a stent comprising the steps of:

- A) inserting an axially extending catheter within the body of a patient, the catheter having an exterior sheath, the exterior sheath having a ring, the ring forming a distal end of the exterior sheath, with a stent in a compact form proximate a distal end of the catheter, the stent underlying the sheath and overlying at least two rings, the at least two rings ring of the exterior sheath assisting in the compression of the stent to the compact form from a partially deployed form,
- B) urging the distal end of the catheter through the patients body to position the distal end at a selected location, and

- C) selectively displacing the at least two rings relative to the sheath to urge the displacement of said stent relative to the sheath to enable selective extension and retraction of the stent relative to a distal end of the sheath.

21. **(Cancelled).**

22. **(Previously Presented)** A method for delivering and selectively deploying a stent as recited in claim 20 wherein the stent is self-expansive and said step of selectively displacing the at least two rings relative to the sheath to urge displacement of said stent relative to the sheath to enable selective extension and retraction of the stent relative to a distal end of the sheath includes engaging the inner surface of the stent between portions of the stent having a minimum inner diameter.

23. **(Cancelled).**